



Seasonal Employee Information

No previous experience is needed as all training is provided on-the-job. There are a wide range of positions available for all ages, skilled and unskilled people.

This can be an enjoyable experience if employees take a practical approach and in return you will have the ability to earn, have fun and meet a range of people whilst experiencing a different part of New Zealand.

The summerfruit harvest (cherries, apricots, peaches, nectarines and plums) starts in Hawke's Bay in November and in Central Otago in December with the peak in January and the season usually finishes by early March.

General requirements:

- Able to work on your feet all day
- Good fitness level and declare any current or previous medical issues which may impact on your ability to carry out certain tasks (such as lifting, use of ladders etc)
- Self-motivated / positive attitude / reliable
- Team player, enjoy the camaraderie of team environment created in the orchard or packhouse setting
- Be organised and well prepared.
 - bring smoko, lunch and hydrate,
 - use sunscreen and wear weather appropriate clothing and footwear,
 - be well rested with a positive attitude
- Comply with the health and safety requirements for working on each site including those regarding the consumption of drugs and alcohol.
- Think and work safe.

Roles and requirements:

On Orchard - Picker

Fruit pickers take fruit off trees, meeting certain size, colour, ripeness and quality standards. Fruit is picked into buckets that are strapped to the shoulders of the workers. The buckets are then emptied into fruit bins and a quality controller or orchard supervisor evaluates the work.

Pickers must be fit and have good vision. The work may involve use and maneuvering of ladders or elevated work platforms. Fruit picking is usually paid on a piece work basis (price per bin or bucket). Piece rates usually reflect how hard the work is. The more difficult the work, the higher the rate.



- Work in the outdoors (in all weather conditions)
- Ability to climb and manoeuvre a ladder
- Physically fit
- Previous/current injuries that can hinder picking (mainly knees, backs, and necks)
- Eyesight – Colour-blindness can be an issue when picking fruit to background colour
- Work ethic can reflect how much you can earn

Piece rates (per bucket or bin) can vary amongst fruit types and orchards.

Piece rates vary, ranging from the equivalent of minimum wage up to \$25 or even \$30 per hour for a good picker depending on crop type, contract/bucket rate and employee work ethic.

Other harvest support roles include bucket shifters, truck and tractor drivers, bird scarers, irrigation maintenance, supervision of pickers. These roles are paid on an hourly rate up to \$25 per hour.

In Packhouse

Tray fillers / packers - work in the packhouse, watching for defects in the fruit and making sure the packed product is presented well.

Labellers - work in the packhouse labelling packed fruit for shipment. Using computer-controlled equipment they ensure the traceability of packed fruit to market requirements.

Box stackers - work in the packhouse stacking packed boxes of fruit. This work involves plenty of heavy lifting so stackers must be strong and fit.

Pallet strappers - secure the loads (with tape or plastic wrap) according to the requirements of the shippers.

Cool store personnel - work in the packhouse cool stores keeping records of stock movements. Accuracy and numeracy are required.

Other packhouse roles include forklift drivers, cleaners and quality controllers.

Pack house hourly rates vary between minimum wage and up to \$25 per hour (for skilled roles such as forklift drivers or quality control).

- Able to be on your feet all day, particularly on concrete floors
- Ability to continue and focus on the task at hand
- Ideally don't get motion sickness
- Be comfortable with repetitive factory work at pace



Accommodation & local transport

Some employers also offer additional services and assistance around accommodation (on or off site) and transport (to and from work) which should be factored in when comparing employers and pay rates.

As with the remuneration, the accommodation offerings and opportunities will vary between employers. They can range from camping sites, bunkrooms, rooms in shared houses, cabins, access to local homestays and backpackers. On average in Central Otago approximately \$45 to \$140 per week.

In the weekly accommodation fees some employers may also include additional extras like power or wi-fi.

Work conditions

Like employees, every employer is different, but they must explain all the rates and other conditions to prospective employees during the application process. By researching several employers, employees will find the orchard that best suits their requirements.

Given the harvest work is over the Christmas period you need to be aware that you will be **unable** to take time off over this period, orchards and packhouses don't shut down over the Christmas break. However, if you have existing commitments for a special event or family reasons, you should notify the employer when you make initial contact. Some employers may be able to accommodate such circumstances if they know well in advance.

With the complexity of weather conditions and crop timings you will also need to be flexible around hours and days of work.

The expectations below are for employees covered by a full time employment agreements and may differ for part time and/or casual employees.

The minimum expectations will be:

- An employee will work between 4 and 7 days per week and not more than 60 hours per week, unless by prior agreement.
- The hourly rate for any additional hours should be by prior agreement.
- The agreed work roster will incorporate regular days off dependent on work schedule and will be with the prior agreement of the employee.
- Mutual respect and care is extended to all team members.
- Diversity is understood and respected (including cultural, gender and religious differences) and no one shall be subject to any discrimination or harassment in employment based on gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, political opinion, social group or ethnic origin.



What should you expect from the employers?

Employers should provide you with an employment agreement including:

- the names of the employer and employee
- a description of the work to be performed
- an indication of the place of work
- the hours of work or an indication of the hours of work (the agreement must set the maximum number of ordinary weekly hours)
- the wage or salary payable
- any other matters agreed on, such as trials or probationary agreements
- the nature of the employment – whether it is fixed-term, seasonal or permanent.

When Public holidays fall on a day you would normally work (employers cannot dictate that these are non-working days if they fall during the period covered by the employment agreement) you will be entitled to a paid day off, no matter how long you've been working. If you agree to work on a public holiday, employers must:

- pay you at least time and a half
- give you another paid day off later (a day in lieu)

If you are already registered with KiwiSaver the employer is obliged to make KiwiSaver deductions and pay employer contributions on your behalf. A KiwiSaver information pack and deduction form should be included in employment packs for all New Zealanders.

For those not already registered and employed as casual agricultural workers, on a day-to-day basis for no more than three months you aren't enrolled automatically, but can opt in. You can either join through the employer or by contracting directly with a KiwiSaver scheme provider.

The automatic enrolment rules apply to casual agricultural workers if your employment is extended beyond three months. You must then be given a KiwiSaver information pack and start member and employer contributions from your next pay. The normal opt-out rules apply.

It is important that if you are not currently registered with KiwiSaver you understand that once you opt in, you do not have the option to opt out at a later date. For more information go to <https://www.ird.govt.nz/kiwisaver/kiwisaver-employers>

Employers must encourage and enable staff to seek advice on the contents of the employment agreement before signing.

Employers should provide a copy of the signed employment agreement for your records. You will need it in the event of any dispute.

Employers must ensure the workplace complies with all health and safety legislation.